

REMARKS

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

Applicants' Counsel apologizes for any undue burden on the Examiner in comparing old claims to new claims. Paragraph 3 of the Action.

Claim 14 has been canceled, but "one of claims 11" is no longer used. Paragraph 4 of the Action.

With respect to Paragraphs 6-12 of the Action, Applicants Counsel would like to express his gratitude to the Examiner for two meticulous telephone interviews where the language of new claims 15-19 was generally agreed upon. However, some changes have been made for purposes of this amendment, and Applicants' Counsel remains available to discuss any claim amendment with the Examiner. See especially claims 27 and 28.

With respect to the art rejections over Wakamatsu or Wakamatsu in view of Kaneko et al, in Wakamatsu, the inner sealing sections 8 and 9 of Wakamatsu are formed by injecting a resin into a mold. Applicants assume arguendo that the seal in the fuel cell of Wakamatsu would involve a membrane electrolyte assembly (MEA) in and intimate contact with the seal. However, Wakamatsu does not teach a step in which the MEA is inserted into a frame as claimed herein so that lateral surfaces of the MEA are in intimate contact with lateral surfaces of the seal, which might be considered outer peripheral surfaces of the elements of the MEA and inner peripheral surfaces of the seal, the seal and the MEA being integrally bonded.

As can be appreciated, given the above position, Applicants also respectfully submit that Wakamatsu does not teach other specific features in claims 16-19.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.114(c)
U.S. Appln. No. 09/981,254

Wakamatsu is basically silent as to how the MEA may be in intimate contact with the sealing section of Wakamatsu, but it is believed clear that the sealing section is injected so as to hold the peripheral portion of the Wakamatsu MEA therebetween. A method as disclosed in Wakamatsu would be disadvantageous since the MEA cannot be precisely positioned in the sealing section.

Applicants rely upon their traversal regarding Wakamatsu for the rejection based on Wakamatsu in view of Kaneko et al.

The newly added claims correspond in sequence to those present at the time of final rejection.

If any issues remain, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned so that a telephone interview may be arranged for.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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